

## Conceptions of Biblical Composition and Poetic Structure in the Commentary on Chronicles in Manuscript Munich 5

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In his preliminary characterization of the anonymous commentary on Chronicles in manuscript Munich 5, I. Ta-Shma called attention to its “exceptional importance for the history of medieval biblical interpretation.”<sup>1</sup> The commentary appears to have been composed in late twelfth-century Ashkenaz, and there are several indications that the author’s mentor was a student of R. Eliezer ben Meshullam and R. Joseph Kara, both active around the turn of the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> It is clear that the author was influenced considerably by Pseudo-Rashi on Chronicles,<sup>3</sup> himself identified by J. N. Epstein as R. Samuel the Pious.<sup>4</sup>

Ta-Shma observed that some striking exegetical principles, while also present in prior works on Chronicles, become a regular feature in the Munich 5 commentary. I would like to expand upon his analysis, and point to several highly innovative aspects of the exegesis found in this work. We will observe that the most noteworthy of these innovations involve the small amount of poetry in Chronicles. First, however, let us consider two important principles noted by Ta-Shma, both of which, we shall see, touch on the sensitive matter of scriptural integrity, and are employed by our commentator not just more frequently than his predecessors but in ways that are qualitatively distinct and programmatically instructive.<sup>5</sup>

- 1 I. Ta-Shma, “Perush Divre ha-Yamim she-bi-ketav yad Minkhen 5,” in *Mi-Ginze ha-Makhon le-Tašlume Kitve Yad ha-‘Ivriyyim* (ed. A. David; Jerusalem: Jewish National and University Library, 1995), 135–41.
- 2 See the examples cited in Ta-Shma, “Perush,” 136–37.
- 3 For example, the Munich 5 author’s introduction is heavily dependent on that of Pseudo-Rashi in both substance and language. E. Viezel’s Hebrew University dissertation (to be available shortly) promises an extensive treatment of Pseudo-Rashi and the relationships between these early German works on Chronicles.
- 4 J. N. Epstein, “Meḥabber ha-perush le-Divre ha-Yamim,” in *Meḥqarim be-sifrut ha-Talmud u-bi-lešonot Shemiyot* (ed. E. Z. Melamed; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1983), 278–85.
- 5 A third principle enumerated by Ta-Shma, “Perush,” 137, involves the limited source material available to Ezra as editor, or *sadran*, of Chronicles, and his method of presentation where material was lacking. See Ta-Shma’s example, “Perush,” 138–39, where the Munich 5 author

[3\*]

## The Integrity of Scripture

*Siddur she-Nehelaq*

In the baraita containing the thirty-two exegetical principles of R. Eliezer,<sup>6</sup> the one called *siddur she-nehelaq* appears rather simple: occasionally, a verse break must be ignored, as the end of one verse reads straight into the next. Prior commentators on Chronicles, following the baraita itself, invoke this in connection with the apparently unfinished phrase *בעד יכפר בעד*—“the good Lord will provide atonement for”—in 2 Chr 30:18. In their reading, the object of the preposition *בעד* appears in the next verse, which continues *כל לבבו הכין לדרוש האלהים...*<sup>7</sup> Our commentator, however, extends *siddur she-nehelaq* to cases where what interrupts the flow of the text is not a verse break, but a phrase, verse, or even a series of verses. In applying the principle in this way, he is attempting, it seems, to marshal rabbinic support from the baraita for this kind of broken-up reading. Also, displaying exceptional concern for the structural integrity of the text, he further requires that any instance of such an interruption have a literary justification: it is not adequate merely to invoke the principle itself.

For example, at the beginning of 1 Chronicles 5, the text contains such an apparent disturbance of the flow:

(א) ובני ראובן בכור ישראל כי הוא הבכור ובחללו יצועי אביו נתנה בכרתו לבני יוסף  
 בן ישראל ולא להתיחש לבכרה. (ב) כי יהודה גבר באחיו ולנגיד ממנו והבכרה ליוסף.  
 (ג) בני ראובן בכור ישראל חנוך ופלוא חצרון וכרמי.

calls attention to a substantial editorial aside on the part of the *sadran*. On conceptions of biblical redaction in this and other medieval commentaries see most recently R. C. Steiner, “A Jewish Theory of Biblical Redaction From Byzantium: Its Rabbinic Roots, Its Diffusion and Its Encounter with the Muslim Doctrine of Falsification,” *JSIJ* 2 (2003): 123–67. To the examples cited by scholars (see also R. A. Harris, “Muda’ut la-’arikhat ha-miqra ešel parshane Šarfāt,” *Shnaton* 12 [2000]: 289–310), let me add the suggestion of Radak at Jer 51:64 that the last chapter of the book, which follows the phrase “Until here are the words of Jeremiah” (עד הנה דברי), is the work of “the one who wrote the book” (מי שכתב הספר).

- 6 *The Mishnah of Rabbi Eliezer or the Midrash of Thirty-two Hermeneutic Rules* (ed. H. G. Enelow; New York: Bloch, 1933). Presumably, the Munich 5 author considered the baraita to be authentically of the tannaitic period. Concerning the work and its origins, see Enelow’s introduction; see also M. Zucker, “Toward a Solution to the Problem of the Thirty-two Rules and the ‘Mishnah of Rabbi Eliezer,’” *PAAJR* 23 (1954): 1–39 (Hebrew section).
- 7 See Pseudo-Rashi, and earlier, *Perush ‘al Divre ha-Yamim meyuhas le-ehad mi-talmide Sa’adya ha-Ga’on* (ed. R. Kirchheim; Frankfurt-am-Main: H. L. Bronner, 1874 [Hebrew and German]), and contrast Ibn Ezra at Ps 73:15, cited by Radak on the verse in Chronicles. On the possibility of a relationship between the commentary attributed to Saadya’s student and later Ashkenazic commentaries see I. Ta-Shma, “Toward a History of the Cultural Links Between Byzantine and Ashkenazic Jewry,” in *Me’ah She’arim: Studies in Medieval Jewish Spiritual Life in Memory of Isadore Twersky* (ed. E. Fleischer et al.; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2001), 61–70, esp. 63–64 (Hebrew section).

The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel. (He was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel—albeit not to be listed as firstborn in the genealogy. While Judah became more powerful than his brothers and a leader came from him, the birthright belonged to Joseph.) The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel: Enoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.<sup>8</sup>

Here, then, is the relevant comment in MS Munich 5:

כאן נחלק הסדר: היה לו לומר מיד "בני ראובן חנוך ופלוזא" וג'; אלא כדי שלא תתמה,  
מאחר שאמ' "בכור ישראל", אם כן למה לא נטל פי שנים בנחלה וגם למה לא יצאו  
ממנו מלכים, הוצרך להודיעינו כל זה המעשה.

Here the presentation is broken up (*nehelaq ha-seder*): it should have said immediately "The sons of Reuben: Enoch, Pallu" etc. But having said "the firstborn of Israel," it had to tell us this whole story so that you should not be surprised why he did not then receive a double portion of land, and, furthermore, why kings did not descend from him.

Thus, the insertion of the historical material before the actual list of Reuben's sons is a case of *nehelaq ha-seder*, with a justification: the interruption provides a necessary explanation for the exclusion of Reuben from the distinction and privilege that his firstborn status should have afforded him.

Lest one think that in using the new term *nehelaq ha-seder*, the Munich 5 author is knowingly transcending the baraita's *siddur she-nehelaq*, consider the following comment at 1 Chr 18:10, leaving out the substance of the textual problem in question:

וזה אחד משלשים ושתים נתיבות שהתורה נדרשת בהן—בסידור שנחלק; היה לו  
לומר...אלא אם כן היה מאבד למה יש באמצע.

This is one of the thirty-two paths by which the Torah is interpreted—*siddur she-nehelaq*: it should have said...but then it would have missed out on what appears in between.

Clearly, our commentator interprets the principle of the baraita itself—that is, *siddur she-nehelaq*—to mean that the flow of the text can be interrupted by parenthetical material ("what appears in between")—albeit only when this is essential. Accordingly, where he applies the term *nehelaq ha-seder* to this very kind of case, he is referring to the same principle of which the baraita speaks.

It will be instructive to cite one more example. In 1 Chr 26:9, the text provides a numeric tally of the family members of Meshelemiah. Since this strangely appears

8 For biblical citations I made extensive use of the NJPS translation. Translations of medieval texts are my own.

a full six verses after the actual list of these individuals, our commentator again invokes the principle under discussion: והיה לו לומר זה המקרא למעלה לאחר שחישב בניו, אלא כאן נחלק הסדר—“This verse should have appeared above after it listed his sons, but the presentation is broken up (*nehelaq ha-seder*).” However, since in this particular case, there is no ready explanation of the need for the awkward structure, he continues: ותימה על מה חילקו—“And it is astonishing that it is broken up.” This makes it abundantly clear that for our commentator, it is not only preferable, but indeed expected, that any instance of *siddur she-nehelaq* have a justification. The absence of an explanation for this particular interruption, therefore, leaves him with a serious exegetical problem.

The use of *siddur she-nehelaq* in the Munich 5 commentary, then, reflects the author’s strong commitment to defending the structural integrity of the book. Revealing what I shall argue to be a surprising traditionalist streak, he refuses to accept the notion that the flow of the biblical text can proceed erratically. This prompts him to apply a rabbinically sanctioned literary principle in a remarkably broad way, and what is more, to insist that each instance of its application be explainable on logical grounds.

“*Ezra Found Three Manuscripts*”

The second principle, *sheloshah sefarim maṣa ‘Ezra*—“Ezra found three manuscripts”<sup>9</sup>—as it is adapted from rabbinic sources by early medieval exegetes,<sup>10</sup> suggests that where Ezra discovered conflicting text-witnesses and could not determine which was correct, he canonized each of the disparate readings in a different biblical context. It is true that our commentator employs this bold solution to contradictions in the Bible with exceptional regularity; yet it is particularly striking that, again probably as a result of his reverence for the structural soundness of the text, he actually shies away from invoking it quite in the way it is employed by prior commentators, including Pseudo-Rashi, whose work he appears to have utilized with some consistency.

Of the few instances where Pseudo-Rashi employs the principle, the most striking one concerns a lengthy doublet in 1 Chronicles, consisting of a passage in 8:29–38 that reappears with minor variations in 9:35–44. Here is Pseudo-Rashi’s comment:

“’ובגבעון ישבו...—פרשה זו...כתובה ב’ פעמים בספר זה...וזהו שמפרש ש...ג’ ספרים מצא עזרא...ובטלו דברי האחד וקיימו דברי השנים...” וכשנמצאו זוגות כמו ’ובגבעון ישבו...’, הוצרך לכתוב שתי פעמים, שאין סדר יחוסן שוה.”

9 On this variation of the principle, which contains a reference to Ezra (עזרא), in contrast to *sheloshah sefarim maṣe’u ba’azarah* (בעזרה)—“They found three manuscripts in the Temple-court”—see Ta-Shma, “Perush,” 136 and “Cultural Links,” 63–64; and also R. C. Steiner, “Biblical Redaction,” 136, especially the literature cited in n. 38.

10 See Steiner, “Biblical Redaction,” 135–53, esp. 137.

“In Gibeon there dwelt...”—This passage...appears twice in this book... in accordance with what is explained...“Ezra found three manuscripts... and they rejected the reading found in one of them, affirming the reading found in two”: when only two were found, as in the case of “In Gibeon there dwelt...” it was necessary to present both, since the genealogies they contain are not precisely similar.

In Pseudo-Rashi’s view, the second appearance of the passage functions solely to give acknowledgment to variations of the text. In the Munich 5 commentary, however, where the principle is regularly invoked to account for contradictions, there appears the following:

...אין לתמוה לפי שלמעלה אמר 'ו[ב]גבעון ישבו' וגו'; ולפי שכבר הזכיר מקומות של שאר השבטים, על כן אמר מקום מושב של בנימן, ואמ' כל הפרשה עד 'ואף המה נגד אחיהם ישבו בירושלם', ומאחר שאמ' שהם ישבו בירושלם הוצרך לומר 'ובירושלם ישבו...' ומאחר שאילה ישבו בירושלם הוצרך לומר משמרות הכהנים... ואי אפשר לומר 'ופלשתים נלחמו בישראל' וגו'... אם לא שישבר לנו את האוזן להודיעינו מי היה שאול... על כן אמר פעם שנייה 'ו[ב]גבעון ישבו אבי גבעון'.

...One need not be surprised that it says “In Gibeon there dwelt” above [too] (1 Chr 8:29): having already mentioned the places of the rest of the tribes, it indicated the place where Benjamin dwelt, that entire section extending until “And they dwelt in Jerusalem opposite their kinsmen” (1 Chr 8:32); since it said that *they* dwelt in Jerusalem, it had to say “In Jerusalem there dwelt...” (1 Chr 9:3); since these people dwelt in Jerusalem it had to mention the priestly shifts...; at which point it could not continue “The Philistines attacked Israel” etc. (1 Chr 10:1) without preparing the reader by reminding him who Saul was.... That is why it says “In Gibeon there dwelt” a second time.

In this comment, the approach to the doublet in question echoes that of the tenth-century commentary attributed to a student of Saadya Gaon,<sup>11</sup> recently elucidated by R. C. Steiner.<sup>12</sup> Rather than invoking *sheloshah sefarim maša 'Ezra* as did Pseudo-Rashi, our commentator appeals to the principle of resumptive repetition to account for the seemingly redundant passage, and in the process explains why all the

- 11 See the reference to the commentary on Chronicles of the “students of R. Saadya” in *Tosafot Yoma* 9a, s.v. *ve-lo*, and the discussion in Kirchheim’s introduction, *Perush*, iv–v. The commentary is of the North African school and in the tradition of Saadya Gaon. On the general matter of citations of students of Saadya in medieval Ashkenazic sources, see S. Poznanski, “Mi hu Rav Sa’adyah she-nizkar ešel ha-mefareshim ha-šarfatim la-miqra?” *Ha-Goren* 9 (1923): 69–89.
- 12 Steiner, “Biblical Redaction,” 142–44. See especially his discussion of “the easterners” (אנשי מזרח) cited in this commentary, whose approach anticipates that of Pseudo-Rashi. See also Ta-Shma, “Cultural Links,” 63–64.

intervening material is needed. Strikingly, notwithstanding his consistent application of *sheloshah sefarim maṣa 'Ezra* to account for disparities *within* parallel passages, he declines to apply it to account for the redundancy itself. For the Munich 5 author, then, a biblical author might indeed purposely record mutually exclusive readings; but when what is at stake is the text's structural integrity, an apparently anomalous feature must be justified based on an acceptable literary principle. A repeated passage cannot be fundamentally redundant, functioning only to give acknowledgment to a handful of text-variants.

There is yet another important comment that reflects a moderately conservative inclination on text critical matters, in the context of minor contradictions involving names. I refer specifically to the well-trodden examples of the names Riphath and Dodanim in Gen 10:3–4, which appear as Diphath and Rodanim in 1 Chr 1:6–7. Radak is known for his defense of the legitimacy of both versions of each name: in his view, they emerged as acceptable options after prior orthographic corruption of prebiblical records.<sup>13</sup> In fact, shunning *sheloshah sefarim maṣa 'Ezra*, the Munich 5 author already provides a variation of this defense of the canonized text:

“ודיפת” — ובספר הישר כת’ “וריפת”; ואין לתמוה בכך, לפי שהאב קורא את בנו בשתי שמות, ובעל הספר לפי שמצא לו שתי שמות כתב שם חדש מה שאינו כתוב בספר הישר.

“And Diphath”—In Genesis it says “and Riphath.” But one should not be surprised about this; for a father can call his son by two names, and the author of the book, having found two names, recorded the new name that is not recorded in Genesis.

Like Radak, our commentator considers the canonization of different versions of names to be accurate and deliberate, but he sees them as preservations of legitimate variations actually utilized during the individual's lifetime, not the result any kind of error.<sup>14</sup>

13 See recently Section III of Y. Berger, “The Commentary of Radak to Chronicles and the Development of His Exegetical Programme,” *JJS* 37/1 (2005): 80–98, and the literature cited there.

14 In another manifestation of traditionalism, unrelated to text critical matters, the author tends to defend biblical figures of distinction. The most striking example involves his interpretation of 1 Chr 22:8, where David indicates that God did not allow him to build the Temple because he had “shed much blood and fought great battles.” For the Munich 5 author, this implies no challenge to the wholesomeness of David's character or deeds, but rather means that David was too fatigued from war to oversee the Temple's construction. This explanation already appears in the commentary attributed to a student of Saadya Gaon, although the question of that work's direct influence on the Munich 5 commentary remains open (in this connection see Ta-Shma, “Cultural Links,” 63–64). Neither commentator accounts for the phraseology at the end of the verse, which seems at least mildly critical of David: “You shall not build a house for my name for you have shed much blood before me (*lefanay*).” On another matter related to the question of

## Principles of Biblical Poetry

*Vertical Correspondence*<sup>15</sup>

As I mentioned, however, the most significant innovations in this commentary concern biblical poetry. Let us first consider a quasi-poetic passage,<sup>16</sup> where our commentator applies what it is for him a principle of both prose and poetry—that of *sotem ve-aḥar kakh mefaresh*—“it leaves the matter unfinished, and afterwards it elucidates it”<sup>17</sup>—and for the first time speaks of what we shall refer to, following his terminology, as *kefelut*—“doubling.”

In 1 Chr 12:17, a group of Benjaminites and Judeans approaches an embattled King David, prompting him to set down his terms: **אם לשלום באתם אלי לעזרני יהיה לי** **עליכם לבב ליחד ואם לרמותני לצרי...** **ירא אלהי אבותינו ויזכח** **לך דוד ועמך בן ישי שלום שלום לך ושלום לעזורך...**—“If you come to me in peace, to support me, then I will make common cause with you, but if to betray me to my foes...then let the God of our fathers take notice and give judgment.” To this, the spokesman Amasai responds: **לך דוד ועמך בן ישי שלום שלום לך ושלום לעזורך...**—“Unto you, David, and with you, son of Jesse, peace, peace unto you, and peace unto him who supports you....” Here is the comment in MS Munich 5:

the Munich 5 author’s traditionalism, Ta-Shma, “Perush,” 140, already noted his harsh rejection of the rabbinic identification of Phinehas and Elijah; but Ta-Shma’s claim that this is a sensitive polemical matter appears to be unsupported. In fact, the author tends to cite such identifications—which can give the impression of authoritative historical tradition—but not necessarily to accept them, and the case of Phinehas and Elijah might well have prompted particular resistance due to the evident chronological incompatibility. As I have argued elsewhere, it is precisely those rabbinic assertions that might be construed as historical traditions which will prompt an exegete with some traditionalist instinct to engage the rabbis seriously, and where the exegete feels compelled to dispute their view, this can produce some of the sharpest language of rejection. See Y. Berger, “*Peshat* and the Authority of *Hazal* in the Commentaries of Radak,” *AJS Review* 31/1 (2007): 41–59, especially 47–49 on the identification of Phinehas and Elijah; and idem, “The Contextual Exegesis of Rabbi Eliezer of Beaugency and the Climax of the Northern French *Peshat* Tradition,” *JSQ* 15/2 (2008): 116–17 n. 5.

- 15 I use this term to denote the linking of each component of one passage to what is seen as its corresponding component in another passage, with all the parallels proceeding in sequential order. What emerges is an AB-AB structural relationship between the two units of text.
- 16 The precise definition of biblical poetry, if there is one, is tangential for our purposes. See J. L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), especially chapter 2.
- 17 R. Joseph Kara, among the teachers of our commentator’s mentor, already formulates this as a principle. See especially his comment at Ezek 27:26, where he asserts that this is a common feature of that book (**ובין כל דרך הספר הזה**). As will become clear in the course of the discussion, the Munich 5 author recognizes *sotem ve-aḥar kakh mefaresh* as a poetic device, most notably characterizing the parallelistic line.

"לך דוד ועמך בן ישי" —סותם ואחר כך<sup>18</sup> מפרש, שלא פירש אם לטובה אם לרעה... "שלום לך שלום לעזרך" —עתה מפרש הסתום למעלה: מה שאומ' "שלום שלום לך" מוסב על "לך דוד", כלומ' לשלומך אנו באים, ו"שלום לעזרך" מוסב על "ועמך בן ישי", להיות עמך ולעזרך בכל לבבינו ובכל נפשינו. ומה שכופל את לשונו ב"שלום שלום" כדי לאמת את דבריו ולהעמידו אל בוריו כדי שיאמינו לו, כמו ששנינו בבראשי רבא: תני ר' חייא: בכל מקום שנ' "אברהם אברהם", "יעקב יעקב", לשון חיבה וזירון. ועל כן אמר "שלום שלום לך שלום לעזרך"... וכפל כל לשונו; והמקרא הזה כפול ומכופל למען יאמינו דבריו. "לך דוד ועמך בן ישי שלום שלום לך [ו] שלום לעזרך" — שתי כפילות הללו מוסבים על של מעלה: "לך דוד" ו"שלום שלום לך" מוסב על "אם לשלום באת אלי"... ו"עמך בן ישי" ו"שלום לעזרך" מוסב על "...לעזרני".

"Unto you, David, and with you, son of Jesse"—He leaves this unfinished, and then elucidates it (*sotem ve-ahar kakh mefaresh*); for he did not explain whether for good or bad... "Peace unto you, and peace unto him who supports you"—Here he elucidates what he left unfinished above: "peace, peace unto you" corresponds to "Unto you, David," meaning that we come in peace; and "peace unto him who supports you" corresponds to "with you, son of Jesse"—to be with you and to support you with all our hearts and with all our souls. He doubles his terminology—"peace, peace"—to reaffirm his point and make it clear, so that they should believe him, as we find in *Genesis Rabbah* (56:7): Rabbi Ḥiyya taught: Wherever it says "Abraham Abraham" (Gen 22:11), "Jacob Jacob" (Gen 46:2), it is an expression of endearment and urgency. Thus, he says "peace, peace unto you, and peace unto him who supports you"... indeed, he doubles all his terminology: this verse contains extensive doubling so that they should believe him. "Unto you, David, and with you, son of Jesse, peace, peace unto you and peace unto him who supports you."—These two doubled phrases correspond to the above: "Unto you, David" and "peace, peace unto you" correspond to "If you come to me in peace"... and "with you, son of Jesse" and "peace unto him who supports you" correspond to "...to support me."

In this reading, first, a striking vertical correspondence characterizes the components of the response to David, as well as their relationship to David's challenge. Addressing David's "If you come to me in peace," the phrase "peace, peace unto you"—based on the principle of *sotem ve-ahar kakh mefaresh*—elucidates the initial cryptic response "Unto you, David." And "peace unto him who supports you" elucidates the phrase "with you, son of Jesse," both of which address David's "to support me."

Second, the author applies the term *kefelut* both to the corresponding segments of the vertical relationship ("These two doubled phrases"), and to the repetition of the word

18 This spelling appears consistently in the manuscript. In transliterations, I have presented the expression as two words for the benefit of the reader.



“peace,” where the doubling is “an expression of endearment and urgency.” While this dual use of the term *kefelut* might appear to conflate structural correspondence and repetition—a type of confusion that J. L. Kugel attributes to medieval exegetes in his treatment of parallelism of the single poetic line<sup>19</sup>—such terminological overlap could alternatively result from the limitations of vocabulary, as recently argued by R. A. Harris.<sup>20</sup> In applying the term to such distinct literary features—first to repetition that functions for emphasis, and then to vertical correspondence in which the second component elucidates the first—the Munich 5 author would appear to perceive, at the very least, two independent subcategories of *kefelut*, and more likely two fundamentally different principles.

A quite remarkable affirmation of vertical correspondence appears in his treatment of the poem in 1 Chronicles 16. The poem begins *הודו לה' קראו בשמו*—“Praise the Lord, call on his name”—in verse 8, and after a masoretic break between verses 22 and 23, continues *שירו לה' כל הארץ*—“Sing to the Lord, all the earth.” In Psalms 105 and 96, these two sections appear as clearly distinct poems, which, according to *Seder Olam* 12, were recited in conjunction with the morning and afternoon burnt-offerings, respectively. Here is the comment in MS Munich 5:

ונראה כי בתילים מתחיל מזמור השיני "שירו ליי" מוסב על "הודו ליי" שהוא אומר  
בבקר, וראיה לדבריי שפירשתי "הודו" לשון "שירו"; "בשרו מיום אל יום ישועתו"  
מוסב על "הודו ליי" ועל "הודיעו בעמים נפלאותיו"; "ספרו בגוים" על "שיחו בכל  
נפלאותיו"; וכן כולן.

It appears that in Psalms, the beginning of the second poem, “Sing (*shiru*) to the Lord,” corresponds to “Praise (*hodu*) the Lord” that is recited in the morning (my interpretation of *hodu* as semantically similar to *shiru* lends support to this); “proclaim his victory day after day” (Ps 96:2) corresponds to “Praise the Lord” and to “proclaim his deeds among the peoples” (Ps 105:1); “Tell [of his glory] among the nations” (Ps 96:3) corresponds to “speak of all his wondrous acts” (Ps 105:2); and so for all of them.

Each line of the second poem, then, parallels a corresponding line in the first. While it is unclear how precisely this follows through to the end, I am aware of nothing resembling this kind of observation elsewhere in medieval exegesis.

### *The Function of Repetition*

In his treatment of this same chapter, our commentator repeatedly combines *kefelut* and *sotem ve-ahar kakh mefaresh* to produce incisive interpretations reflective of

19 Kugel, *Idea*, 172–81.

20 R. A. Harris, *Discerning Parallelism: A Study in Northern French Medieval Jewish Biblical Exegesis* (Providence: Brown University, 2004), 100.

methodological innovation. I add emphasis below to some highly suggestive remarks in a comment toward the beginning of the poem:

“שירו לו זמרו לו” —כפל לשון על “הודו ליי” שפירשתי לשון שירה. ובכל המזמור הזה הכפיל המשורר את שירו מרוב חיבת הקודש, ומרוב געגועיו ושעשועיו כופל כל לשונו וסותם כל דבר ודבר ואחר כך מפרשו.<sup>21</sup>

“Sing to him, exalt him in song”—This is a doubling of “Praise the Lord,” which I have interpreted to mean singing. *In this entire psalm the poet employs doubling* out of his great love of the holy. Due to his great yearning and passion, *he doubles all of his expressions, leaving each matter unfinished and afterwards elucidating it.*

This comment indicates (1) recognition of some kind of repetition or parallelism as a sustained device, possibly even a defining structural feature;<sup>22</sup> and (2) a notably well-developed understanding of *kefelut*, which provides that the second component of a repetitious or parallel construction is intended to add meaning to the first, not merely to serve as reinforcement.

In one especially striking series of comments spanning verses 9–18, our commentator links together several repeated terms, so that the verses yield progressive clarification.<sup>23</sup> I present some of the key the relationships below:

שיחו בכל נפלאותיו...  
זכרו נפלאותיו אשר עשה מופתיו ומשפטי פיהו...  
כל הארץ משפטיו וזכרו לעולם בריתו...  
ברית עולם...לך אתן ארץ כנען...

- 21 In the only other manuscript attesting to this part of the commentary, Madrid 5470, in place of this last phrase there appears one that gives little sense and seems to be corrupt (מרוב געגועין ושעשועין [?]). On the other hand, I shall cite below some apparently authentic phrases attested only in MS Madrid which lend support to our argument.
- 22 Compare Harris, *Discerning Parallelism*, 36–37, concerning Rashi at Exod 15:1. See also J. Haas, “Kefel lashon ke-middah parshanit ve-ha-muda‘ut le-shirah ke-sug sifrut be-perushe Rashbam,” *Beit Mikra* 47/3 (2002): 281–83, who refutes an argument in prior scholarship claiming that Rashbam recognized parallelism as a defining structural principle of biblical poetry; and Haas’s more recent and expansive treatment, “‘Repetition of Meaning in Different Words’ in the Northern French School of Exegesis,” *HUCA* 75 (2004): 51–79 (Hebrew section), and the literature cited there.
- 23 The most relevant selections, the substance of which I summarize briefly in the next paragraph, read as follows: “שיחו בכל נפלאותיו”, “זכרו נפלאותיו” —סותם ואחר כך מפרשו. ... “זכרו נפלאותיו אשר עשה”, “ומה הם נפלאותיו? מופתיו ומשפטי פיהו. הם היו נפלאותיו שנתן ארץ כנען לארץ ישראל על ידי נסים וגבורות... “משפטי פיהו” זהו מתנת ארץ ישראל; ולפי שנתנה להם עד אלף דור שכל דבריו קיים סלה... נופל בו לומר לשון משפט... “בכל הארץ משפטיו” מוסב על “זכרו נפלאותיו אשר עשה (ו)מופתיו [ו]משפטי פיהו”, וכה פתרונו... ובעבור זאת אומר לכם זכרו נפלאותיו ומשפטי פיהו, כי “בכל הארץ משפטיו”, ודבר אלהינו יקום לעולם: נשבע ליתן לנו את ארץ כנען ויקם את דברו כאשר ענינו ראות. “זכרו לעולם בריתו” מוסב על [“זכרו?”] נפלאותיו ו”משפטי פיהו”; מהו הברית? “דבר צור לאלף דור”, כמו: עד עולמי עולמים נתן לנו את ארץ כנען... “אשר כרת את אברהם” —ענה מפרש מה הן כל אותן נפלאות וכל שאמרנו, וגם הברית: זהו אשר כרת יי את אברהם “ברית... לאמר” וג’.

According to our commentator, the second line—in which the term *nifle 'otav* (“his wonders”) reappears—clarifies that the wonders in question are *mishpatim*, that is, miracles decreed by God with everlasting impact. These *mishpatim*, in turn, are those connected with his *berit* (“covenant”), and are particularly worthy of praise, because they pervade *kol ha-areṣ* (“the entire land”). The *berit* itself, a *berit 'olam* (everlasting covenant), is the promise of *lekha etten ereṣ Kena'an* (“to you I will give the land of Canaan”); for God permanently transformed the land of Canaan into the land of Israel by virtue of his miraculous deeds.

### *The Parallelistic Line*

Importantly, this synthesis of *kefelut* and *sotem ve-aḥar kakh mefaresh* also extends to the single poetic line, including instances where there is no repetition of terminology. Even if the Munich 5 author did not fully conceptualize the dynamic rhetorical interrelationship between components of the parallelistic line observed by modern scholars,<sup>24</sup> he comes closer than any of the medieval interpreters whose methods have been documented to this point.<sup>25</sup> For in applying the exegetical principles under discussion, our commentator approaches a systematic conception of the complementary relationship between half-lines.

Consider the following simple example at verse 11, the fourth line of the poem:

"דרשו יי"ו ועוזו"<sup>26</sup>—כח מעשיו אשר הפליא לעמו ישר', וסותם ואחר כך מפרש "בקשו  
פניו תמיד".

- 24 See Kugel, *Idea*, especially chapter 1, and subsequently, chapter 1 of R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1981). Criticism of Kugel's and Alter's work focuses largely on several matters peripheral to our discussion. Inasmuch as for our commentator, *kefelut* in the single poetic line is a manifestation of a broader principle whereby two units of text exhibit a complementary relationship, one is reminded of A. Berlin's treatment, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), where she argues that in its most fundamental sense, parallelism spans a wide variety of linguistic relationships and often does transcend the individual line. Needless to say, the Munich 5 author's principle, *sotem ve-aḥar kakh mefaresh*, is far less nuanced, and it would be quite misleading to speak of his genuine anticipation of any modern theory.
- 25 See especially Moses Ibn Ezra's *Kitab al-muḥāḍara wal-mudhākara*, ed. A. S. Halkin (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1975), 137–51, particularly sections 3, 6, and 8 (Arabic and Hebrew; English excerpts appear in A. Berlin, *Biblical Poetry Through Medieval Jewish Eyes* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991], 76–79; see also A. Cooper, “Biblical Poetics: A Linguistic Approach,” [Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1977], 152–53); and see Kugel, *Idea*, 179–81, who discusses the limitations of Moses Ibn Ezra's conception of parallelism.
- 26 I present the *plene* spellings found in the Munich 5 manuscript. It should be noted that this commentary appears to be the lone source of an important biblical text-variant at 1 Chr 4:14, where an otherwise unattested midrash is cited that expounds upon the phrase **כי חדשים היו** (“because they were new”), even as our texts all read **כי חרשים היו** (“because they were craftsmen”). No such option appears in de-Rossi's collection of biblical variants. In general,

“Turn to the Lord and his might”—the strength of his deeds wondrously performed on behalf of Israel his people. It leaves this unfinished and then elucidates it (*sotem ve-aḥar kakh mefaresh*): “seek his presence constantly.”

The word “constantly” in the second half-line, then, intensifies the religious imperative: one is not only to seek God, but to do so on a consistent basis. In the next verse, with which we are already familiar, the second half-line likewise elucidates the first:

“זכרו נפלאותיו אשר עשה”—ומה הן נפלאותיו? “מופתיו ומשפטי פיהו.”  
 “Remember the wonders he has done”—And what are his wonders? “His miracles and the decrees of his mouth.”

Indeed, in MS Madrid National Library 5470, the only other extant witness to this part of the commentary, a reference to the relevant principle appears explicitly:

“זכרו נפלאותיו אשר עשה”—סותם ואחר כך מפרש; [מה] הן נפלאותיו? “מופתיו ומשפטי פיהו.”  
 “Remember the wonders he has done”—It leaves this unfinished, and then it elucidates it (*sotem ve-aḥar kakh mefaresh*): [What] are his wonders? “His miracles and the decrees of his mouth.”

In fact, in the Madrid manuscript, concerning the broader application of *sotem ve-aḥar kakh mefaresh* that we noted earlier in connection with this verse, rabbinic sanction appears to be ascribed to the principle:

“שיחו בכל נפלאותיו”—זה אחד מן הדברים שהתורה נדרשת בהם, בס[ו]תם ואחר כך מפרש; וכאן סתם ולמטה מפרש “זכרו נפלאותיו.”  
 “Speak of all his wonders”—This is one of the means by which the Torah is interpreted—that of *sotem ve-aḥar kakh mefaresh*: here it leaves the matter unfinished, and below it elucidates it: “Remember the wonders [he has done, his miracles and the decrees of his mouth].”

In all likelihood, the text in the Munich 5 manuscript reflects scribal truncation, and this passage in MS Madrid—probably along with the previous one—is authentic. If *sotem ve-aḥar kakh mefaresh* is one of the “means by which the Torah is interpreted,” the reference is probably to “a matter that is not elucidated in its place, but is elucidated elsewhere” (דבר שאינו מפורש במקומו ומתפרש במקום אחר), one of the

both this work and R. Samuel Masnut’s commentary to Chronicles in MS Vatican 97 cite a fair amount of midrashic material that does not appear elsewhere. See, for example, the notes in Y. Berger, “Radak on Chronicles: Critical Edition, Translation and Supercommentary” (Ph.D. diss., Yeshiva University, 2003), at 1 Chr 4:41, 5:12, 14:2, 15:3, and 21:1.

thirty-two principles in R. Eliezer's baraita.<sup>27</sup> But while the examples provided in that baraita consist of details left out of one biblical book that are included in a later one, here the principle is applied within one book and to a single author. It appears that, as in the case of *siddur she-nehelaq*, our commentator has expanded a principle in R. Eliezer's baraita to marshal support for his conception of the biblical author's method of presentation.<sup>28</sup> *Sotem ve-aḥar kakh mefaresh* is thus transformed into a rabbinically endorsed exegetical option, and extends not only to a single book, but to a single poem, and—as we have now seen—even to an individual poetic line.

One more example, at verse 13, is highly instructive. According to the poet, the praising of God is incumbent upon *בני יעקב בחיריו*—“the offspring of Israel, his servant / the descendants of Jacob, his chosen ones.” Here is the beginning of the comment in MS Munich 5:

לפי שהם זרע ישראל עבד יי', דין הוא שכך העבד יהודה את אדונו; ועוד, שהם בני יעקב בחיר יי'... על כן דין הוא שישבחו לאשר בחר בהם.

Since they are the offspring of Israel the servant of the Lord, it is proper that a servant thus acknowledge his master. Furthermore, they are descendants of Jacob, the Lord's chosen one...so it is proper that they praise the one who chose them.

Is this merely a case of interpreting each half-line independently? Or does the writer recognize a rhetorical interrelationship between the different descriptions of Israel's status—God's servant on the one hand, and his chosen one on the other? The subsequent comment suggests an answer:

”בני יעקב בחיריו” —כפל לשון הוא על ”זרע ישראל עבדו”. וכל כפל לשון שבמקרא לשון חיבה ולשון זירוז הם; וכן שנינו בבראשית רבה: ”אברהם אברהם”, ”יעקב יעקב”, ”משה משה”, ”שמואל שמואל” —תני ר' חייא: לשון זירוז ולשון חיבה.

“The descendants of Jacob, his chosen ones”—This is a doubling of “The offspring of Israel, his servant.” All doublings in Scripture are expressions of endearment and expressions of urgency. So we find in *Genesis Rabbah* (56:7): “Abraham Abraham” (Gen 22:11), “Jacob Jacob” (Gen 46:2), “Moses Moses” (Exod 3:4), “Samuel Samuel” (I Sam 3:10): R. Hiyya taught that these are expressions of urgency and expressions of endearment.

It may be argued that in citing this midrash here, the Munich 5 author fails to differentiate between mere repetition—the focal point of the baraita—and the

27 Kara also employs this principle, at Josh 10:10. Compare n. 12 above.

28 Steiner, “Biblical Redaction,” 127, speculates that a similar expansion of this principle is implied by the earlier *Midrash Leqah Tov*, of the Byzantine school—one that he shows to have influenced the Munich 5 commentary concerning other important aspects of biblical composition.

parallelism exhibited by the verse. But this does not detract from the more crucial point: our commentator applies the midrash's principle of *kefelut* to a bicolon where he has explicitly affirmed that the second half-line differs meaningfully from the first.<sup>29</sup> Apparently, in invoking *kefelut* here as a type of "expression of endearment" and "urgency," he sees the second half of the verse as paralleling the first and intensifying it with a meaningful and poignant addition: God deserves praise from his servants—indeed, the very people whom he has chosen!

Our commentator's appreciation of parallelism extends still further. For example, note the following addendum to the comment above, which suggests his recognition of standard parallel pairs:<sup>30</sup>

"זרע ישר' עבדו בני יעקב בחיריו"—דוגמתו ניבא וכ' ישעיה הנביא "למען עבדי יעקב וישר' בחירי".

"The offspring of Israel, his servant / the descendants of Jacob, his chosen ones"—This is similar to what the prophet Isaiah prophesied and wrote (Isa 45:4): "For the sake of my servant Jacob / and Israel my chosen one."

And at verses 28–29, addressing staircase parallelism, he provides a more comprehensive list of examples than does any other extant medieval exegete, and then adds a trenchant observation:

"הבו ליי' משפחות עמים הבו ליי' כבוד ועוז"—כפל לשון מתוך חיבה. ודוגמת[ו] "ליבבתיני אחותי כלה ליבבתיני..."; "עורי עורי דבורה עורי עורי", ולא פירש לצורך מה עורי עורי—"דברי שיר"; "לא לנו ייי' לא לנו כי לשמך תן כבוד"—סותם ואחר כך מפרש, וכן כולם; "יספת לגוי ייי' יספת לגוי נכבדת"; וכן כפל ושילש לשונו כאן: "הבו ליי' משפחות עמים הבו ליי' כבוד ועוז הבו ליי' כבוד שמו"—כאן פירש: ומה שמו? ייי', אדון לכל—אם כן ראוי הוא לשבחו שבחות... לפי שיש מלך המתקלס ביופיו והון רב ואין בו, אבל אתה "כשמך אלהים כן תהילתך", ושמך "אדון"...

"Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength"—The expression is doubled out of endearment. It is similar to "You have captured my heart, my sister, my bride, you have captured my heart [etc.] (Song 4:9); "Awake, awake, O Deborah, awake, awake," yet it has not explained: for the sake of what "awake, awake"?—"express yourself in song!" (Jud 5:12); "Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name bring glory" (Ps 115:1)—it leaves the matter unfinished and

29 This is to be distinguished from Haas's astute observations, "Repetition of Meaning," 61–68, that Rashi recognized parallelism even where he offered midrashic *alternatives*, and semantic doubling even where he distinguished between the meanings of parallel half-lines. There is no indication, to my knowledge, that Rashi perceived a dynamic interrelationship between components of the parallelistic line.

30 Compare Harris, *Discerning Parallelism*, 61 n. 23, concerning Rashbam at Gen 20:13.

afterwards elucidates it (*sotem ve-aḥar kakh mefaresh*), as in the case of all of them; “You have added to the nation, O Lord, you have added to the nation and were honored” (Isa 26:15). So too it doubles *and triples* the expression here: “Ascribe to the Lord, O families of Israel, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength; ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name”—here it elucidates. For what is his name? “The Lord, Master of All.” Thus, he is worthy of receiving praise...for there are kings who solicit admiration for their appearance and for great wealth, when they really have nothing; but you—“As is your name, God, so is your praise” (Ps 48:11), your name being “Master”...

While other commentators also recognize staircase parallelism,<sup>31</sup> ours sees a third step here: “Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength” completes the thought of “Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,” and then undergoes further elaboration in “Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name”: God is worthy of the honor suggested by his name *Adonay*, as he is genuinely the master of the world.<sup>32</sup>

#### *Paronomasia and Inclusio*

As do other medieval exegetes, our commentator recognizes paronomasia and inclusio.<sup>33</sup> His one application of paronomasia is unspectacular, as he invokes it—using the standard term *lashon nofel ‘al lashon*—for the phrase *hoshi‘enu Elohei yish‘enu* (“Deliver us, O God, our deliverer”) at 1Chr 16:35, where the phonetically similar words are in any case of the same root.

Consider, however, his discussion of inclusio, at 1Chr 16:34:

”הודו לייי כי טוב” —לפי שהתחיל מזמורו ב”הודו לייי קראו בשמו” סיימו ב”הודו”;  
וכן שבחו של מזמור. וכן נתייסדו רובי מזמורי תילים: ”אשרי האיש” ומסיים ”אשרי

31 See Harris, *Discerning Parallelism*, 37–40, 65–68, and what might be called a variation of staircase parallelism in Moses Ibn Ezra, 248–49 (translated in Berlin, *Biblical Poetry*, 79). It is notable that the Munich 5 author includes in his list the examples from Song of Songs and Isaiah, in which the first part of the staircase standing alone *does* convey a sensible thought. The only other clear case of this among Northern European exegetes appears to be Rashbam’s comment at Exodus 15:11, where he states that that verse *מי כמכה באלם ה’ מי כמכה נאדר בקדש*—“Who is like you among the celestials, O Lord; who is like you, majestic in holiness”—belongs in this category. However, Rashbam leaves any such examples out of his lists, which appear at Gen 49:22, Exod 15:6 and Qoh 1:2.

32 This should not be confused with the question of whether or not the “staircase” classification requires that the verse contain a third colon; see E. L. Greenstein, “One More Step on the Staircase,” *Ugarit Forschungen* 9 (1977): 77–88, and the earlier treatments cited there.

33 On paronomasia among Northern European exegetes see chapter 8 of R. A. Harris, “The Literary Hermeneutic of Rabbi Eliezer of Beaugency” (Ph.D. diss., Jewish Theological Seminary, 1997), and the citations there. See also his discussion of inclusio, 202–7; and likewise see the Tosafist collections at *Berakhot* 10a mentioned below.

כל חוסי בו", "יִי אֲדוֹנָינוּ" ומסיים "יִי אֲדוֹנָינוּ מֵה אֲדִיר שִׁמְךָ בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ", "יִי בְּעוֹךְ יִשְׂמַח מֶלֶךְ"—"רומה יִי בְּעוֹךְ", "יִעֲנֶךָ יִי בְּיוֹם צָרָה" ומסיים "יִעֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם קְרָאֵנוּ", "תְּהִלָּה לְדוֹד" ומסיים "תְּהִילַת יִי יִדְבַר פִּי", "הִלְלוּ יְהוָה הַלְלוּ א' בְּקִדְשׁוֹ" ומסיים "כָּל הַנְּשַׁמָּה תְּהַלֵּל יְהוָה הַלְלוּ יְהוָה".

"Praise the Lord for he is good"—Since he began the psalm with "Praise the Lord; call on his name," he ends it with "Praise...." This gives aesthetic quality to the psalm. Many of the psalms are constructed this way: "Fortunate is the man" (1:1) concludes with "Fortunate are all who take refuge in him" (2:12); "O Lord, our master..." (8:1), which concludes "O Lord, our master, how majestic is your name throughout the earth" (8:10); "O Lord, in your strength a king rejoices" (21:2)—"Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength" (21:14); "May the Lord answer you in time of trouble" (20:2), which concludes "May [the King] answer us on the day we call" (20:10); "A song of praise of David" (145:1), which concludes "My mouth shall utter the praise of the Lord" (145:21); "Hallelujah, Praise God in his sanctuary" (150:1), which concludes "Let every soul praise the Lord, Hallelujah" (150:6).

Again, the list is fuller than others that one finds, such as those in the Tosafist collections at *Berakhot* 10a. Notably, this list, unlike others, includes Psalm 20, where one of the essential repeated terms appears with different suffixed pronouns—*יִעֲנֶךָ* ("May [the Lord] answer you") at the beginning and *יִעֲנֵנוּ* ("May [the King] answer us") at the end. This paves the way toward analyzing the poem's development based on the difference between these suffixes (and that of *יִעֲנֵנוּ* ["may he answer *him*"] in the middle of the psalm), even if we have no indication that our commentator actually takes this next step.<sup>34</sup> Of greater interest, in connection with the last example, he does not include all of Psalms 146–150—which begin and end with "Hallelujah"—as do the Tosafists. Rather, he notices the more compelling significance of Psalm 150, where "Hallelujah, *Praise God*" is balanced by "...*praise the Lord, Hallelujah.*" This too amounts to a crucial step toward appreciating the function of the *inclusio* and

34 Several contemporary critics note this *inclusio*, already identified in *Midrash Tehillim*; see, for example, P. C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 185. As I see it, the change from *יִעֲנֶךָ* in verse 2 to *יִעֲנֵנוּ* in verse 7 marks a movement away from the intense focus on the royal war leader—whom the speaker addresses directly in verses 2–6—towards a greater emphasis on God, the provider of deliverance: *עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי הוֹשִׁיעַ ה' מְשִׁיחוֹ יִעֲנֵנוּ מִשְׁמֵי קִדְשׁוֹ בְּגִבּוֹרוֹת*—"Now I know that the Lord will give victory to his anointed one / will answer *him* from his heavenly sanctuary / with the mighty victories of his right arm." This "anointed one" is subsequently bypassed entirely, as the Psalm proceeds to speak of God's direct salvation of Israel, contrasting other nations' reliance on mundane sources of strength. Ironically, the word "king" appears in the psalm only in the final verse, referring not to the anointed one but to God himself, who is now called upon to respond directly to his people: *הַמֶּלֶךְ יִעֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם קְרָאֵנוּ*—"May the King answer *us* when we call."



development of the psalm: the imperative “Praise” (הללו), which marks each half-line of verses 1–5, finally gives way to the sweeping “Let *every soul* praise the Lord” (כל (הנשמה תהלל יה) in the next and final verse.<sup>35</sup>

### Conclusion

The Munich 5 author’s concern for the structural integrity of biblical prose, I have argued, gives rise to his expansive redefinition—if measured use—of the rabbinic principle of *siddur she-nehelaq*, and to his unwillingness to dismiss lengthy doublets as mere acknowledgments of minor text-variants. Of greater note, the attention to poetic techniques that he provides in the space of a single poem—together with the incisiveness and innovation reflected by his comments themselves—yields a picture of exceptional sensitivity to the workings of biblical poetry. His work merits an important place in the Ashkenazic exegetical tradition, and more generally, in any consideration of the history of interpretation of the timeless poetry of the Bible.

35 See, for example, L. C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 323–24.